

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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P R 201530Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0452
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 13302

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MILITARY ADDRESSEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: PEPR GW US
SUBJECT: COMMUNIST DIPLOMATS' REACTION TO PRESIDENT
CARTER'S VISIT

BEGIN SUMMARY. IN TWO SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS, A SOVIET
AND AN EAST GERMAN DIPLOMAT HERE REFLECTED SOME CONCERN
ABOUT CERTAIN ASPECTS OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO
THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC AND BERLIN BUT, ON THE WHOLE,
STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE THEIR COUNTRIES ATTACH TO
CONTINUED GOOD RELATIONS. THEY ALSO STRESSED THAT THEY
DID NOT WISH THE AUTOBAHN DELAYS TO INITIATE A SERIES
OF HARSH EXCHANGES OR MUTUAL RETALIATORY MEASURES.
THE SOVIET OFFICIAL APPEARED CONCERNED ABOUT THE
PRESIDENT'S REMARKS REGARDING REUNIFICATION; THE EAST

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GERMAN ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S SUGGESTION THAT HE MIGHT
VISIT EAST BERLIN AND/OR THE GDR. END SUMMARY.

1. COUNSELORS OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY AND OF THE GDR
REPRESENTATION HERE YESTERDAY SPOKE WITH THE US POLITICAL
COUNSELOR, AT THEIR REQUEST, IN ORDER TO OBTAIN
BRIEFINGS ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO GERMANY AND

BERLIN. IN THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATIONS, THEY ALSO
VOICED VIEWS ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE VISIT.

2. THE CONVERSATIONS COVERED THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

IMPACT OF THE VISIT TO BERLIN

THE EAST GERMAN COUNSELOR FOCUSED PARTICULARLY ON
THIS SUBJECT. HE SAID THAT HE HAD READ THE PRESIDENT'S
TOWN MEETING REMARKS AND OTHER STATEMENTS IN BERLIN AND
HAD COME AWAY WITH THE CONCLUSION THAT THE TENOR OF THE
PRESIDENT'S STATEMENTS WAS VERY MUCH LIKE THAT OF THE
ANNAPOLIS SPEECH: A READINESS FOR CONFRONTATION BUT A
DISPOSITION TO COOPERATE. HE SAID THAT THE FORMER
APPEARED TO BE PARTICULARLY HIGHLIGHTED IN BERLIN, A
SITUATION WHICH THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR DESCRIBED AS
JUSTIFIABLE IN THE LIGHT OF THE SITUATION OF BERLIN
ITSELF AND OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED ON THE AUTOBAHN THAT
MORNING.

THE EAST GERMAN SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS AND THAT
HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ANTICIPATED THAT THERE WOULD BE
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CERTAIN ATMOSPHERICS INEVITABLE TO SUCH A VISIT. HE
SAID THAT, IN LOOKING AT SUCH A VISIT, THERE WAS ALWAYS
THE FIRST REACTION WHICH WAS HEAVILY EMOTIONAL AND THE
SECOND WHICH WAS MORE ANALYTICAL. HE FELT AN ANALYTICAL
EVALUATION WOULD DEMONSTRATE THAT THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT
HAD NOT BEEN INTENDED TO SHIFT US POLICY ON BERLIN AND
GERMAN MATTERS. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ANTICIPATED
THE POPULAR REACTION AND UNDERSTOOD THAT IT WOULD COME
ABOUT.

THE AUTOBAHN STOPPAGES

DURING A LENGTHY DISCUSSION, AT US INITIATIVE, OF
THE AUTOBAHN STOPPAGES, THE GDR DIPLOMAT ON OCCASION SAID
THAT THEY HAD BEEN CAUSED BY HEAVY WEEKEND TRAFFIC, BUT
HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME PERHAPS
ILL-THOUGHT OR ILL-COORDINATED PURPOSE. HE SAID HE
HIMSELF HAD SPOKEN WITH FRG AUTHORITIES ON SATURDAY
AND HAD SAID THAT THERE WAS NO POLITICAL MOTIVATION.
WHEN THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR SAID THAT WE HAD POSED THE
ISSUE REPEATEDLY TO THE WEST GERMANS AND HAD BEEN
ASSURED THAT, ON THE BASIS OF THE BEST POSSIBLE

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EVALUATION, THE DELAYS WERE HEAVIER THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN JUSTIFIED BY TRAFFIC PROBLEMS, THE EAST GERMAN DID NOT CONTRADICT THE CONCLUSION. INSTEAD, HE SAID THAT HE HOPED WE HAD NOTICED THAT THE STOPPAGES ENDED DURING THE EARLY PART OF THE DAY AND HAD NOT REOCCURRED.

THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR SAID THAT WE HAD NOTICED THIS AND THAT WE HAD ADJUSTED OUR OWN PUBLIC STATEMENT ACCORDINGLY. HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT WE COULD NOT FOREGO A PUBLIC STATEMENT OR A PROTEST, NO MATTER WHAT WE WERE TOLD NOW, BECAUSE OPEN ACCESS TO BERLIN WAS A KEY ELEMENT OF THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT AND OF STABILITY IN CENTRAL EUROPEAN RELATIONSHIPS. HOWEVER, HE ADDED THAT WE HAD NOT SOUGHT TO CREATE A FALSE MOOD IN ORDER TO EXPLOIT THE OCCASION AND THAT WE REMAINED INTERESTED IN PRESERVING A CALM SITUATION RATHER THAN IN MUTUALPOSTURING. THE EAST GERMAN
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DIPLOMAT STRONGLY AGREED AND SAID THAT THEY HAD NOT INTENDED A CONFRONTATION AND CERTAINLY IN NO WAY HAD WISHED TO IMPLY THAT THEY DID NOT FULLY RECOGNIZE THE PRESIDENT'S RIGHT TO VISIT BERLIN AT ANY TIME. HE MADE THE THE USUAL OBSERVATION ABOUT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S VISIT, TO WHICH WE REPLIED AS APPROPRIATE.

THE SOVIET OFFICIAL REACTED WITH CONSIDERABLE DISCOMFORT WHEN THIS SUBJECT WAS RAISED BY THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR. HE DID NOT DISPUTE THE ANALYSIS THAT THE DELAYS HAD BEEN LONGER THAN JUSTIFIABLE BY TRAFFIC PROBLEMS. HE INDICATED THAT THE SOVIET UNION IN NO WAY QUESTIONED THE PRESIDENT'S RIGHT TO VISIT BERLIN AND STRESSED THE DESIRE TO HAVE NO PROBLEMS ON THE ACCESS ROUTES. THE EXCHANGE ON THE CHANCELLOR'S VISIT RAN ALSO ALONG PREDICTABLE LINES.

GERMAN REUNIFICATION

THE SOVIET DIPLOMAT APPEARED MOST CONCERNED ABOUT THIS ELEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S PRESENTATION IN GERMANY AND BERLIN. HE SAID THE SOVIET UNION UNDERSTOOD OUR POLICY AND HAD CONCLUDED, UPON CAREFUL READING OF THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS, THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD NOT INTENDED TO CHANGE THAT POLICY. NONETHELESS, HE EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT A HEAVY ACCENT ON THE RE-UNIFICATION ISSUE. HE ASSERTED THAT THIS DID NOT TROUBLE THE SOVIETS BUT, OF COURSE, TROUBLED SUCH OTHER COUNTRIES AS FRANCE. THE GDR DIPLOMAT DID NOT MENTION THE ISSUE.

THE PRESIDENT'S POTENTIAL VISIT TO EAST BERLIN AND EAST GERMANY

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THE GDR DIPLOMAT RAISED THIS QUESTION ALMOST AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CONVERSATION. HE SAID THE GDR HAD NOTED THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AND HAD WONDERED IF THEY SHOULD BE READ AS A SIGN OF ANY SPECIFIC OR NEAR INTENT. THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR SAID THAT, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, HE KNEW OF NO SPECIFIC INTENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S TO PLAN FOR AN EARLY VISIT OF SUCH KIND.

THERE WAS A QUICK REVIEW OF THE SPECIFIC QUESTION RELATING TO THE SEPARATION BETWEEN THE GDR AND EAST BERLIN, WITH NO

MEETING OF MINDS.

ANALYSIS OF THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT ITSELF

THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR STRESSED TO BOTH HIS INTERLOCUTORS THE IMPORTANCE THAT SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT AS A SIGN OF THE POSITIVE STATE OF GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND OF THE POPULAR BASIS FOR IT. HE ALSO STRESSED THE LONG-TERM ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF THE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDINGS AND OBLIGATIONS DERIVING FROM THE SUMMIT. NEITHER EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMAT CHALLENGED THESE CONCLUSIONS. THE EAST GERMAN SAID THERE HAD BEEN SOME CONFLICTING ANALYSES WITHIN THE GDR ABOUT THE SUMMIT, WITH SOME BELIEVING IT HAD ACHIEVED NOTHING AND OTHERS BELIEVING THAT IT HAD BEEN A SIGNIFICANT EVENT.
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